United Nations

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General's Personal Envoy Cyrus Vance to travel to Bosnia-Herzegovina tonight in response to Security Council statement on Friday, 10 April, appealing for end to fighting in that region and inviting Secretary-General to dispatch his Envoy.

+ Secretary-General appeals to all concerned to end fighting in Horn of Africa, compelling humanitarian agencies to withdraw from the areas.

+ Security Council warns Iraq not to interfere with or threaten security of aircraft and personnel of Special Commission during its surveillance flights; Iraqi Permanent Representative to United Nations declares that Iraq "will not interfere" with high altitude surveillance flights.

+ Special Commission on Iraqi Disarmament says it is unable to begin practical part of ongoing monitoring and verification of Iraq's weapons capabilities because of that country's failure to provide information.

+ General Assembly changes dates of United Nations Environment and Development Conference to 3 to 14 June; sets up preparatory body for 50th anniversary of the United Nations, among other action.

+ Human Rights Committee ends 44th session during which it has commented on reports by Algeria, Belgium, Colombia, Peru and Yugoslavia.

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Alarmed by reports of rapid deterioration of the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Security Council has appealed for an immediate end to fighting in the Yugoslav Republic. The Council has further asked the Secretary-General urgently to dispatch his Personal Envoy, Cyrus Vance, to the area to cooperate with the European Community in its efforts to solve the crisis.

In a statement on behalf of Council members on Friday, 10 April, Council President Simbarashe Simbanenduku Mumbengegwi (Zimbabwe) reiterated an appeal

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issued three days earlier in resolution 749 (1992), to stop the fighting in Bosnia-Herzegovina immediately. By that resolution, the Council had authorized the full deployment of the United Nations Protection Force in Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR) and called on the parties in the region "not to resort to violence", particularly in any area where UNPROFOR was to be based or deployed.

Today at Headquarters, Spokeswoman Nadia Younes told correspondents that the Secretary-General had asked his Personal Envoy, Cyrus Vance, to undertake a mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina. Mr. Vance was to leave Geneva for Yugoslavia tonight.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has expressed "deep concern" over the intensity of armed clashes in the Horn of Africa, particularly in southern Sudan and eastern Ethiopia, and has appealed to all concerned to end the fighting.

In a statement issued on 11 April in Geneva, the Secretary-General charged that the escalation of fighting had adversely affected the flow of humanitarian assistance to the civilian population in both areas, as international humanitarian agencies had been compelled to withdraw from the areas concerned.

He appealed to all those engaged in the conflicts to exercise maximum restraint and to take immediate steps to bring an end to the fighting. He said he would continue to follow the situation closely and establish contact with the parties concerned.

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The Security Council has warned Iraq not to interfere with or threaten the security of aircraft and personnel of the Special Commission on Iraqi Disarmament during its surveillance flights over that country's territory.

The warning was contained in a statement to the press read out by President Sambarashe Simbanenduku Mumbengegwi (Zimbabwe) on Friday following consultations of the Council.

The statement said members of the Council had learned with grave concern from the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission of recent developments which appeared to constitute a threat to the safety and security of the aerial surveillance flights over Iraq carried out by the Commission.

By the statement, the Council reaffirmed the right of the Special Commission to conduct such aerial surveillance flights and called upon the Government of Iraq to ensure that the Iraqi military forces would not interfere with or threaten the security of the flights concerned.

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The Council warned the Government of Iraq of the serious consequences which would ensue from any failure to comply with these obligations.

Meanwhile, the Iraqi Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Abdul Amir A. Al-Anbari, told the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission, Rolf Ekeus, during a meeting today, that Iraq would "not interfere with the high altitude surveillance flights". Mr. Al-Anbari said that this position was stressed in a letter from the Foreign Minister of Iraq addressed to the President of the Security Council.

Other topics discussed during the meeting included operational aspects of the Special Commission's work in the future and declarations due from Iraq.

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The Special Commission on Iraqi Disarmament has reported that it is unable to begin the practical part of its ongoing monitoring and verification of Iraq's compliance with Council demands for "full, final and unconditional disclosure" of its weapons capabilities, "because of positions maintained by Iraq".

In its report to the Council of 10 April, the Special Commission said that as of 8 April, Iraq had failed to submit an update of information on specific activities, facilities and items, and a report on the legislative and administrative measures taken to implement resolution 687 (1991), as requested by the Council.

The Commission noted that it would be "neither legally nor practically able" to initiate and operate effectively the monitoring and verification plan without "clear acknowledgement by Iraq" of its obligations under resolution 687.

It recalled the statement issued by the Council President on 19 February stressing that "unconditional agreement by Iraq to implement its obligations" under the resolutions "is one of the essential preconditions" for any reconsideration by the Council to lift sanctions against the country.

Following that statement, the Executive Chairman of the Commission, Rolf Ekeus, was sent to Iraq to meet with high-level representatives of the Iraqi Government for an unconditional agreement to implement all its obligations under the Council resolutions. When Mr. Ekeus did not receive such an agreement, the Council, in a statement dated 28 February, condemned the failure of Iraq to comply with the Council's demands.

New attempts were made to reach the agreement of Iraq to comply fully with its obligations during meetings held on 12 and 13 March between the Security Council and Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, who said to have come to New York on a "goodwill mission". The delegation of Iraq promised to provide the information under the plan by early April. However, by 8 April, the Commission had still not received any information from Iraq.

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The present report is submitted in pursuance of Council resolution 715 (1991) which requested the Secretary-General and the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Hans Ekeus, to report to the Council every six months on the implementation of the plans approved in that resolution. The Special Commission's plan covers the long-term monitoring and verification of Iraq's obligations not to use, retain, possess, develop, construct or otherwise acquire any weapons or related facilities and items prohibited under resolution 715 relating to proscribed ballistic missiles with a range greater that 150 kilometres, as well as chemical and biological weapons and facilities.
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The General Assembly this morning decided to change the dates of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) from 1 to 12 June to 3 to 14 June in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, as recommended by the Preparatory Committee for the Conference. In so doing, the Assembly also adopted, without a vote, a series of recommendations of the UNCED Preparatory Committee.

The Assembly also decided, without a vote, to establish a Preparatory Committee to plan activities for the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the United Nations in 1995, and consisting of the members of the General Committee and open to all Member States.

Also this morning, the Assembly asked the Secretary-General to implement measures to restructure United Nations subsidiary machinery in the economic, social and related fields. Those measures call for strengthening regional commissions, particularly those in the developing countries, among other things.

In other action, the Assembly, noting with concern the damage caused by recent cyclones in the South Pacific States, urged the United Nations, international financial institutions and the international community to continue assisting the affected countries to develop disaster preparedness and mitigation programmes.

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The suspension of the democratic process in Algeria, institutionalized violence in Peru and the impunity of the military and drug traffickers in Colombia were among the concerns stressed by members of the Human Rights Committee during that body's 44th session, which concluded Friday, 10 April at Headquarters.

The Committee also expressed its concern about discrimination against immigrants in Belgium. Regarding Yugoslavia, it focused on human rights violations by the Army, which the Federal Government no longer controlled, as well as inter-ethnic conflicts and the treatment of minorities.

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In other action during its three-week meeting, which began on 23 March, the Committee decided to request Peru to report back to it regarding recent events.

The Committee, which monitors implementation of the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights by its 104 States parties, is composed of 18 experts serving in their individual capacities. During its next session in July in Geneva, the Committee will consider reports from Belarus, Mongolia, Afghanistan, the Republic of Korea and Berundi. It will also resume consideration of Peru's report.

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